

Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

January 20, 2016

2:00pm – 5:00pm

EOPSS, Transportation Building

Meeting Minutes

JJAC Member Attendance: Robert Gittens (Chair), Cecely Reardon (Vice Chair), Wes Cotter, Mark Booher, Kimberly Larson, Peter Forbes.

EOPSS Staff: Andrew Polk, Ednei Furtado, Angela Davis.

Guests: Child Advocate Maria Mossaides, Kristin Murphy, Alisa Yang.

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approve Meeting Minutes
3. Discussion with the Child Advocate - Maria Z. Mossaides
4. Work Plan Review
5. Updates:
 - a. Diversion Study & Leadership Forum
 - b. Compliance Monitoring and Court Holding Facilities
 - c. JJAC-DYS Leadership Series & Who should attend for JJAC
 - d. Data Collection Bill Testimony
 - e. DMC Subcommittee Report Out
 - f. JJAC Membership Issues
 - g. FFY16 Three Year Plan Update

Handouts: Agenda, Minutes, Work Plan, Leadership Training Series Schedule, Data Bill, Data Bill Testimony

The meeting began with a **welcome and introductions**.

The review and approval of the **minutes** from the prior two meetings was tabled until the next meeting due to a lack of quorum.

Child Advocate Maria Mossaides introduced herself and discussed the vision, goals and activities of the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). The OCA is engaging multiple agencies and organizations to develop its goals and identify the needs of children in the Commonwealth. The OCA hopes to optimize the Commonwealth's responses to the needs of its children by ensuring there is constructive collaboration between child-serving agencies and, to the extent possible, good integration of services. Child Advocate Mossaides recognizes the importance of having comprehensive data systems and ensuring high quality services in the child welfare and juvenile

justice systems. Amongst other concerns, she hopes help make the transition from childhood to adulthood easier for young people.

The subcommittee was provided with an update on the **status of the Work Plan** priorities and objectives (below).

Ednei Furtado provided an update on progress with the **court holding facilities** project to improve compliance with the sight and sound separation core requirement of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP). Procedural changes and/or use of “blinds” over cell windows have been put into effect in some of the facilities. These changes are currently in a pilot phase and are being evaluated for their effectiveness. The Executive Office of the Trial Court (EOTC) is working on creating a comprehensive timeline for meeting milestones towards completed remedies. Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) funds (approximately \$300,000) are available to assist with the costs of renovation in addition to Formula Grant funds identified for non-renovation remedies. State funds will be needed to cover substantial portions of the renovation projects. The JJAC would like to convey a sense of urgency on these matters to the EOTC and the Division of Capital Assets Management and Maintenance (DCAMM).

Andrew Polk and Dr. Mark Booher provided an update on activities regarding the **Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)** section of the Work Plan. As is well known, there continues to be a data analysis and reporting problem with the MassCourts data system. As a result, a DMC assessment study cannot be conducted. This may lead to a finding by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJPD) that the Commonwealth is out of compliance with the DMC core requirement of the JJDP. Dr. Booher discussed trends and data he had obtained about racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline practices. While school discipline has declined, significant racial and ethnic disparities still exist.

Chair Bob Gittens provided an update on the status of the **Diversion Study**. Chair Gittens disseminated the study to members of the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Leadership Forum. He presented the findings of the study at meeting of the Leadership Forum.

Mr. Polk raised the question of whether there should be advocacy for a **juvenile-specific bail statute**. Such a statute could be comprised of the elements that constitute the validated J-PAST risk assessment instrument designed for assisting with judicial bail decision-making.

Dr. Kimberly Larson completed written testimony relating to the state senate’s **juvenile data collection bill** and will submit it to the legislature.

There was discussion of the **trauma-informed practices** section of the Work Plan. The committee decided that the next meeting should focus on this issue. Guests who are experts on trauma will be invited to present and discuss the issue.

Regarding the **juvenile competency** section of the Work Plan, the activities have been completed. Written and oral testimony was provided to the state legislature on the issue of a juvenile competency to stand trial statute. It is unclear whether the bill will pass in this legislative session.

The subcommittee discussed the **JJAC-DYS Leadership Training Series** that is funded with JJAC Formula Grant funds. Dr. Larson has helped DYS with the development of the topics and identification of the speakers who will participate in the training. The subcommittee discussed who should attend on behalf of the JJAC and EOPSS.

Mr. Polk reported that the **2014 JJAC Annual Report** has been completed. It is posted on the website. Mr. Polk will have it printed when it is approved by EOPSS.

The meeting was adjourned.